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NATURE, STATUS AND SCOPE OF MANPOWER AND EMPLOYMENT PLANNING PROCESSES IN AFRICA

Table of Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction and Summary	1
II.	Overview and Background to the Need for Human Resources Planning and Programming in Africa	6
III.	General Nature of Human Resources Planning and Programming in Africa	14
	(a) Data Collection, Processing and Analysis	15
	(b) Policy Formulation and Administration..	20
IV.	Status of Manpower and Employment Planning Institutions and Activities: A Selected Survey	26
	(a) Institutional Arrangements for Human Resources Planning	27
	(b) Manpower and Employment Planning Activities	31
	(i) Policy Revision and Reforms	33
	(ii) National Workshops/Seminars/ Conferences	37
	(iii) Surveys and Studies	40
V.	Observations on the Effectiveness of the Process and its Long-Term Prospects for Stimulating Economic Recovery and Development in Africa	42

The Nature, Status and Scope of Manpower and Employment Planning Processes in Africa

I Introduction and Summary

1. Among the major challenges faced by African Governments right after gaining political independence was the challenge to gain and retain economic independence. The task of gaining economic independence became more difficult throughout the 1970s, and unmanageable during the first half of the 1980s. Several analysis of economic development trends in Africa during those years show that the performance of African economies, by and large, had been sluggish. Structural imbalances; widespread low level productivity; heavy dependence of local production on imports; failure to diversify into new types of exports; and the absence of domestic linkages have all been identified by African governments as existing elements that characterize most African economies _1/

2. Worst still and as pointed out by the ECA, by the first half of 1980, was a difficult time for Africa. The agriculture sector was severely hit by drought, desertification, and low productivity causing major food shortage; and a great dependence on food aid. The industrial sector on the other hand reached an undesirable state of decay due primarily to the slow pace of investment flow; a rapid depreciation on existing capital goods and infrastructure; and the lack of adequate indigenous entrepreneurs and skilled managerial manpower. On the Social front, imbalances had developed between the number and types of available jobs and job seekers; between population growth and resource accumulation and distribution, and between social norms, political desires and production patterns _2/ These were indeed very difficult times for development managers in Africa.

3. Among the major contributing factors to this state of sluggishness are: (i) the inadequacy and poor condition of Africa's transport and communication infrastructure; (ii) Africa's incapability to adequately exploit, process and utilize, in an integrated manner, her vast reserves of natural resources, and (iii) a diminishing trend in capital growth with a growing financial leakage both of which give rise to huge payment deficits and the accumulation of foreign debt. _3/ A careful analysis of these contributing factors raises a fundamental question on the appropriateness of the regions policies, strategies, programmes and attitude toward the development and utilization of its vast human resources potentials for development.

_1/"Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis"; OAU/ECM/2XV/Rev.2, E/ECA/ECM.1/1./Rev.1, 1986.

_2/"Policies and Strategies for Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa in View of Africa's Long-term Development Challenges and Strategies"; E/ECA/AAU/ED/86/2, p.1.

_3/Ibid; p.5.

4. This notwithstanding, a number of African Governments have instituted actions, ranging from the creation of ministries, departments or units for dealing with human resources management to the conduct of reviews and studies on the status of human resources in their respective countries, and the formulation of regional strategies in their search of optimum ways of ensuring an efficient human resources development and utilization process so as to realize their desire for economic recovery and development. While these efforts deserve to be commended, most of them fall short of the required orientation, framework and support that could ensure a more permanent solution to the present low level contribution that is being made by human resources managers to Africa's economic growth and development endeavours.

5. The objective of this report therefore, is to review the nature and status of these efforts particularly as they relate to human resources planning activities and programmes in Africa at the macro-level; and to highlight their scope for future action with the view to assisting member States in their efforts to place the human factor in its rightful cell within their respective economic and social recovery and self-sustained development strategy. It is accordingly divided into four sections in addition to the introduction.

6. Section one traces the background and establishes the need for a comprehensive human resources planning subsystem within the context and framework of the Lagos Plan of Action, (LPA), Africa Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, (APPER), and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD). It points out that the achievement of a breakthrough in structural transformation as desired by these global strategies, would require adequate investments in human resources development and programming, effective organization and development management within the prospects of African long-term development challenges and changing priorities. The section argues that such an investment should be done with the aim of ensuring an integrated process and machinery both comprehensive in nature, approach and scope with the sole objective of fostering Africa's long-term economic and social development.

7. The second section gives a "bird's eye view" of the general nature of human resources planning and programming in Africa. It is known that considerable efforts have been made during the last five years by Member States' Governments to strengthen national, subregional and regional human resources planning and programming institutions. However, it is pointed out that problems associated with data collection, processing and analysis; and those associated with policy formulation and administration have seriously constrained the achievements of these efforts. There are institutional and technical weaknesses in the data gathering process. For example difficulties exist in icentifying the type of required data; conceptualizing and finding operational definition for basic labour force and labour market concepts such

as employment, unemployment, underemployment, productivity, work, etc. and conceiving, planning, designing, manpower conducting and processing surveys. As such, the section calls for the development of requisite institutional and staffing capabilities to deal with these pressing problems, if the process of human resources planning is to be made effective.

8. On the question of policy formulation and administration, the section recognizes the conscious efforts that are being made by Member States towards the adoption of policy packages and argues that more work is still to be desired particularly for developing and operationalizing a systematic process through which meaningful human resources policies ought to be determined and harmonized with other developmental policies. In looking at the nature of the problem, the section points out that the African region on the whole, suffers from a state of poor management and poor policy planning due primarily to the disintegrated and unsystematic approach used for policy formulation and administration. The result of this has not only constrained manpower development and utilization planning and programming in Africa, but has also made mockery of socio-economic development planning in many African countries. Two major conclusions are drawn in the section. First, African Governments will have to ensure that human resources policy packages contain an outline of goals, and objectives that are in line with national development goals and objectives. Secondly, national manpower policies need to be re-enforced by clear statements on the steps, strategies and techniques for initiating and implementing human resources management activities.

9. Section three reviews the structure and effectiveness of national institutional arrangements for human resources planning in, and the type and nature of human resources planning activities undertaken by a few selected Member States in an attempt to describe the status of manpower and employment planning processes in Africa. The review shows that for the most part, Member States have made modest gains towards evolving an institutional framework for strengthening their respective capabilities for human resources planning, and have undertaken a number of associated activities in the form of policy revision and reforms, training workshops/seminars/conferences, studies and surveys. What is therefore suggested in the section is that such efforts would need to be integrated, intensified and sustained on a systematic basis within the context of national development during and beyond the economic recovery period as envisaged by both APPER and UN-PAAERD

10. A number of steps to be taken at the national level to broaden the nature and scope of manpower and employment planning in Africa, and to improve the status and effectiveness of the process for enhancing and sustaining Africa's economic recovery and development, are suggested in the last section. No doubt these steps would need maximum investments and commitments to human resources management in the years ahead with national

governments, the private sector and the donor community playing their respective roles actively.

II Overview and Background to the Need for Human Resources Planning and Programming in Africa

11. In addition to the many individual initiatives taken over the years, African Governments have collectively embarked upon a serious search for measures and strategies that would meet the challenge of development particularly since the early 1970s

12. In 1971, the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted Resolution 218(X) in respect of Africa's economic development strategy for the 1970s. This initiative was strengthened when, in 1973, African Heads of State and Government adopted the "Declaration on Cooperation, Development and Economic Independence" during the 10th Ordinary Session of the OAU. Four years later, in the continued search for economic independence, the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted the Revised Framework of Principles for the New International Economic Order in Africa which was submitted to them by the ECA Executive Committee.

13. To focus these and other efforts, a colloquium was organized in Monrovia (Liberia) early 1979 to discuss Africa's development prospects and economic growth up to the Year 2000. This was followed immediately by the 5th meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic planning held in Rabat (Kingdom of Morocco). The meeting adopted Resolution 332(XIV) on Africa's development strategy which was subsequently adopted by the 16th Assembly of African Heads of State and Government in July 1979 in Monrovia, and became known as the "Monrovia Declaration and Commitment." Significantly, the Monrovia Declaration laid down the two basic foundations of "self-reliance" and "self-sustainment" as Africa's Long-term strategy towards economic independence. In 1980, elements of the Monrovia Declaration were translated into concrete action-oriented sectoral and inter-sectoral development proposals and strategies by African Heads of State and Government when they met in Lagos, Nigeria, and emerged with the "Lagos Plan of Action" (LPA) and the "Final Act of Lagos" (FAL).

14. The LPA elaborates those actions needed for Africa to achieve "ownership and mastery" of major production factors. Three specific actions that have far reaching implications for the establishment and operation of requisite human resources development and utilization planning and programming processes in Member States are: (i) the establishment and implementation of large-scale and long-term human resources development programmes; (ii) strengthening existing subregional and regional institutions for training and research; and (iii) development of science and technology within the context of overall national development

plans. In this connexion the plan specifically called for the _4/ In this connexion, the plan specifically called for the integration and consolidation of manpower planning and programming functions in a coherent institutional framework. It was indeed felt and emphasized in the LPA that human resources being Africa's greatest asset, their full mobilization and effective utilization should be a major instrument of sustaining self-reliant development.

15. The severe economic conditions and social decline which reached their apex by 1984 seriously frustrated African governments efforts to achieve these and other lofty objectives of the LPA. Africa's response was a renewed commitment made towards finding suitable and lasting solutions to the regions development problems.

16. Following a series of successive meetings by the ECA Conference of Ministers and the OAU Ministerial Council _5/ the 21st Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU identified and decided on a set of short- and medium-term priorities required to revive the African economy and lay the necessary foundation for durable structural changes, national and collective self-reliance and sustained growth and development during the period 1986-1990. This led to the adoption of a set of measures as Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990 (APPER). The corresponding commitment was drawn up in an analytical document entitled Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis _6/ which was adopted by the First Extraordinary Session of ECA's Conference of Ministers, and latter by the Council of Ministers of the OAU at its 15th Ordinary Session in March 1986. On the basis of Africa's Submission the 13th Special Session of the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990 (UN-PAAERD) _7/

17. Both action programmes addressed themselves principally to achieving a breakthrough in structural transformation by placing greater emphasis on food and agriculture, industry, human resources, science and technology, transport and communications and trade and finance. Needless to say, the achievement of this breakthrough would, to a larger extent, require adequate investments in human resources development at all levels particularly for third level and vocational education. Substantial inputs of

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_4/"Implications and Guidelines to the Implementation of the Human Resources Development and Utilization Programme of the LPA, ECA document, ST/ECA/PAMM/HRP/3/31, pp.3-4; 1981

_5/For a detailed elaboration of these meetings, see "The African Response: from the LPA to the 13th Special Session of the UN General Assembly; Rasheed and Sarr; ECA/CERPAD/87/14, Addis, pp. 11-16.

_6/See OAU/ECM/XXV/Rev.2; ECA/ECM.1/1/Rev.2, March 1986.

_7/A/RES/S-13/2, 13 June 1986.

trained manpower, skilled and semi-skilled operatives, technical personnel, supervisory and managerial personnel at all levels, instructors and teachers, specialists in a variety of disciplines as well as a crop of indigenous entrepreneurs would all be needed to have the necessary breakthrough measures formulated and implemented. The crucial element in all these would be that of managing the African economies effectively with the human factor playing the leading role.

18. Equally if not more important, is that such investments in human resources development ought to be allocated and managed within the prospects of Africa's development challenges and changing priorities as conceived in the LPA and elaborated upon in APPER and UN-PAAERD and those for ensuring their productive utilization. More so, investments in human resources for development would need to focus on new challenges and strategies that would have resulted from the implementation of Africa's recovery programmes between now and 1990. All things being equal, these challenges would be those transcending beyond recovery and foundation building into challenges for transforming and sustaining African economic and social structures for self-sustaining development.

19. Accordingly, issues such as "effective organization" and "development management" would be among the key variables to be harnessed in meeting the above challenges. _2/ Foundational to the issue of effective organization is the evolvement of development oriented leadership, a process of development oriented administration and a development conscious society. Additionally, there would be a need for new development concepts, approaches and organizational behaviour as well as greater cooperation between institutions and individuals. On the other hand, Africa's ability to manage effectively available resources will have to be enhanced. This would depend largely upon the knowledge, skills and attitudes of those who formulate and appraise policies, those who approve and enact the policies, and those who execute the elements of such policies. In practical terms, these must be men and women having the necessary "know-how" and "know-why" that would ensure and exploit the appropriate relationship between development objectives, available resources and development activities so as to effectively manage growth and the distribution of that growth. This means that national human resources management process in Africa will have to take on a new and more purposeful dimension not only in terms of planning for the development and utilization of human resources, but also of ensuring their effective utilization for national development. In this connexion, an emerging consensus is that such a process should evolve from within, and rely upon an integrated organ

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_2/For further elaboration of these issues, see E/ECA/AAU/ED/86/2; Policies and Strategies for Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa in View of Africa's Long-term Development Challenges and Strategies, ECA, 1986.

comprehensive in nature, approach and scope having capabilities to:

(a) initiate, formulate and administer manpower policies within the framework of national development policies;

(b) identify, analyse and specify manpower development and utilization problems, objectives and alternative programmes and strategies;

(c) coordinate, monitor and evaluate the execution of adopted measures to ensure optimum results and consistency;

(d) prepare national and sectoral manpower development and utilization plans that would synchronize labour supply and demand targets in conformity with overall national development objectives.

20. Two major conditions would need to be satisfied if the process is to be put into the desirable shape and motion. First, a comprehensive and integrated human resources planning and programming machinery will have to be conceived, designed and developed. Secondly, adequate attention will have to be given to the machinery to ensure its functional scope, operational effectiveness and resource capacities in terms of staffing, authority within the power structure and the machinery's interrelationship with other sectoral machineries. Decisions made at the 1981 and 1984 meetings of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization are clear indications that the need to satisfy these two pre-conditions is recognized by African Governments, many of whom have taken steps towards their implementation though the pace, with regards to functionalizing the process, and reenforcing the required institutional capabilities, is not as fast as was anticipated by the Conference during those meetings. It may be recalled that during its first meeting, the Conference called upon African governments to, among other things, accord high priority to planning the development and utilization of human resources and to ensure that the process be an integral part of overall national economic and social development planning. Also Member States were called upon to set up machinery and institutional arrangements for coordinating human resources and employment planning, within the framework of the Lagos Plan of Action, and to adopt comprehensive national training policies that would adequately provide the means and mechanism for manpower training in both public and private sectors on a sustained basis. _9/

21. The recognition of this need is further exemplified by the priority given to human resources development and utilization in

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_9/Report of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization, E/ECA/CM.8/3, 1981.

APPER and Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis which gave birth to UN-PAAPED. 1_0/ For an example, APPER asserts that "the attainment of the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Final Act of Lagos (FAL) depends, in the final analysis, on the development of a wide range of human resources required for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of programmes covering the entire spectrum and sectoral activities in the economic development process". 1_1/ Accordingly, the Governments of Africa submitted as one of four priority areas to be given full attention, the development of human resources. 1_2/ What remains is to translate this recognition into sustained action over and beyond the recovery period for African governments to succeed in revitalizing the food and agriculture sector, combatting drought and controlling desertification as desired in the action programmes for African self-relient and self-sustained development.

III General Nature of Human Resources Planning and Programming in Africa

22. Efforts have been made by many African Governments since the 1980s to lay the framework for human resources planning and programming in Africa. Review of African governments annual reports, national and regional development plans, executive pronouncements, etc. would, in one way or the other, show a rising consensus on "man" as being the object and subject of development. A deeper analysis would also show that mention is frequently made of the need to integrate human resources planning into development planning as a strategy for ensuring economic growth and distribution. Equally, though not entirely encouraging, is the growing attention most of these plans and reports are given to the development of health, education, vocational training and agriculture, all of which have great significance for the development and utilization of human resources. While this observation do suggest a positive trend in human resources planning and programming in Africa, the process of manpower and employment planning continues to be saddled with bottlenecks which must be removed if the human factor is to play an effective role in Africa's economic recovery and long-term development. These bottlenecks which reflect the nature of the process, are manifested by a weak data base and a poor policy planning and management process.

(a) Data Collection, Processing and Analysis

1_0/See OAU; "Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990"; ECA, Addis, 1985; "Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Afric's Economic and Social Crisis"; Addis, 1986; and the "United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990"; General Assembly, A/RES/S-1[illegible], June 1986.

1_1/APPER, op. cit., p.3

1_2/Africa's Submission; op. cit.

23. The need to collect, process and analyse human resources data has always been felt, but somehow nothing substantial seems to be happening in meeting this need appreciably. Evidence continues to show weaknesses in the process not only for data gathering, but also for identifying the types of data needed, the most effective way of producing them and the means to ensuring their widest possible use.

24. These weaknesses have resulted in a number of major gaps and deficiencies in existing manpower data and information leading to a poor state of manpower and employment planning. On account of these gaps, the process suffers from (i) the slow pace in the production of statistics which often makes most data obsolete when published; (ii) an undesirable level of data accuracy and reliability; (iii) incompletness of coverage; (iv) the lack of comparability of time series data; and (v) the lack of involvement on the part of users and producers of manpower information. Furthermore, what has been even more frustrating is that efforts made by many governments to improve the situation have been retarded by many other structural factors whose existence need not be. These include (i) the existence of poor functional linkages between the institutions for and processes of data collection, data processing, data analysis and data utilization; (ii) inadequate or piecemeal specification of the type and form of data to be collected on the part of planners, policy makers and policy implementors; and (iii) placement of more emphasis on the use of an ad hoc data collection system as opposed to the use of a continuous and comparative data collection system.

25. Conceptual difficulties such as finding operational definition for basic labour force and labour market concepts within the African context have equally influenced the nature of human resources planning and programming in Africa. Not enough work has as yet been done in Africa to elucidate these concepts in respect of the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions within the region. Definitions of concepts such as employment, unemployment, underemployment and labour force are even more problematic. In the few cases where they have been explicitly stated, they emphasize wage remuneration, at times, time and rarely intensity of work and productivity. In most cases, these definitions make it difficult to be precise about employment conditions outside the formal sector of African dual economies.

26. Because of the problems of concept and definition, another difficulty arises in identifying and measuring the magnitude of employment, unemployment and underemployment which implies that an instrument has to be devised which will more precisely identify people who fall into the various employment categories. For example, speaking of labour markets and the collection of labour market information in the traditional sense would affect only a minority of the African working population directly. Consequently, Richter has advised that it may not be quite meaningful to "talk of say emoloyment market information within the African context which in its sense may be taken to mean all

quantitative and qualitative information on the major characteristics of the working population, levels of employment, unemployment and underemployment, labour supply-and-demand positions; and imbalances in levels of earnings in different economic sectors, occupations and regions". 1_3/ In other words, African governments have as yet to come up with realistic concepts, definitions, and measurement instruments which will enable them to plan for productive employment and the effective utilization of the labour force. Needless to say, the failure to do so could present a central constraint on employment planning as the situation could pose a problem of understanding how these labour conditions exist side by side with each other in African economies.

27. In addition to the structural factors and conceptual difficulties which characterize the human resources planning process in Africa, the application of the survey method for data collection leaves much to be desired. For the most part, a "manpower survey" in Africa has meant "stock taking" of available and needed skills within the formal sector of the economy. These surveys have more often than not failed to take into account the broader role labour plays simultaneously in the growth and management of the entire economy which embraces the informal sector and the rural subsistance sector as well. Besides, little attention is paid to the selection of the form, type and frequency of the data collection method. Survey "subject-matters" are often ill-defined and when they are, they are limited in scope for establishing existing "cause-effect" relationships between the various aspects of human resources management and national development. Secondly, most surveys in Africa are conducted without, perhaps due to resource constraints, undertaking an adequate "survey pre-planning" review exercise. Such a review could have dealt with the identification of preliminary indicators in relation to short and long-term objectives of the desired survey with the view to establishing possible linkages and areas of collaboration. Also such a review could have diagnosed operational and administrative problems encountered during past surveys and accordingly devise possible contingency strategy to avoid their re-occurance. Associated with this is the weakness in the critical link which ought to exist between data collection, analysis and policy formulation. The region, on the whole, has limitation for converting processed and unprocessed data into policy proposals and strategies. The shortage of, and in some cases, the absence of manpower and employment planners and analysts has been cited as being a root cause of this limitation.

28. Finally, most manpower surveys are not fully executed. To be complete, three interconnecting activities will have to be undertaken: conducting the field work; processing the data; and publication of the results. In this connexion, two observations

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1_3/Richter, L.E.; "Upgrading Employment-Market Reporting: Realities and Priorities in Africa"; printed in The Challenge of Employment and Basic Needs in Africa, ILO, Chapter II, p. 123, Oxford, Nairobi, 1986.

seem important. First, survey execution activities ought to be closely linked to planned activities, resources and schedules. Secondly, the same degree of enthusiasm, if not more, that was given to the pre-execution phase should be devoted to all of the three interconnecting survey execution activities.

29. Experiences in Africa have, however, shown that most manpower survey exercises have fallen short on these two important considerations. The results, of course, are manifested in wasted resources, and loss of faith in the data gathering and planning processes. In some cases, failure to understand the nature and interrelationships of the various components in survey execution has created this undesirable situation. The principal lesson which is often missed is that manpower survey is never complete until the results are usable for policy and programming purposes. Many a times, the "fun-fare" of a manpower survey is extinguished when interviewers have returned from the field and exhuasted their exchanges of experiences in the various enumeration areas. At times, other pressing administrative duties and government objectives have prevented survey officials from conducting a planned survey or from completing it after the fieldwork.

30. Inorder to redress these and other problems it would require the development of requisite institutional and staffing capabilities that would ensure a systematic and scientific data gathering, data processing and data utilization system. Among other things, the system should evolve the ability to prepare and conduct manpower surveys in response to specific needs and objectives within an integrated planning framework. Needless to say that the development of such an ability is in its infancy in most African countries. This suggests the urgent need for training in the techniques and procedures for the preparation and conduct of manpower surveys.

(b) Policy Formulation and Administration

31. African governments have realized that the existance of a comprehensive national manpower policy provides a vital component in the process of socio-economic development and planning. This recognition is fully reflected in the Africa Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) as well as in UN-PAAERD. It is equally reflected in national development plans and various official pronouncements on the vital role to be played by the human factor in national recovery and self-sustained development. Broadly speaking, all governments are consciously committed in one form or another towards adopting policies or policy packages aimed at ensuring the efficient development and utilization of Africa's vast human resources potential for production, productivity and growth. Despite the recognition and conscious efforts made, more is still to be desired with respect to the formulation and administration of national manpower development and utilization policies within the context and framework of overall economic development policies and strategies. For the most part, African nations have, as yet, to develop and operationalize

systematic processes through which meaningful human resources policies are to be determined and harmonized with other developmental policies. To begin with, the "art" of manpower "policy planning" in the region is in its infancy, and unfortunately, very little investment is being made to develop the state of the art. Because of this poor planning for manpower policy formulation and administration in Africa, the process suffers from three limitations.

32. First, manpower planning policies in Africa are generally not forceful on issues of efficiency and equity of development. For example, national action and attitudes on employment and labour-market policies tend not to improve the balance between the growth of labour supply and the growth of labour demand; nor do they tend to ensure an increase in real personal earnings, a wider distribution of those earnings, and a steady increase in labour productivity and mobility particularly, in the rural and urban informal sectors of African economies. Secondly, poor manpower policy planning has led to a situation where enunciated policies are unclear about manpower planning and programming objectives, expected outputs and institutional responsibilities. For example, other than broad, and at times, inconsistent statements on the need for generating employment or for developing the nation's human resources, most African countries do not have clear policy statements or packages that would (i) provide guidance for effective planning, development and utilization of human resources; (ii) minimize duplication of national efforts and wastage of scarce resources; and (iii) provide a basis on which different national human resources development and utilization programmes such as those dealing with health, nutrition, social welfare are integrated, co-ordinated, monitored, evaluated and adjusted for maximum results. Thirdly, manpower policy planning in the region is often limited in scope. Very little thoughts have been given to policies that could deal with other related problems resulting from rapid urbanization and a declining economic environment. As such, the planning process lacks the capacity to deal with the issues of urban unemployment, wages, investments, educational facilities, and the size and living conditions of the labour force.

33. In addition to the poor state of manpower policy planning, African Governments have as yet to take practical steps and adopt appropriate strategies and techniques within an integrated process that would ensure systematic manpower policy formulation and policy administration. Consequently, much of the attempts made at manpower policy determination have made little impact towards ensuring the acceptability and full implementation of formulated policies. More often than not, steps to have the policies approved at the highest possible level of authority are inadequate and mainly ad-hoc in nature. In some cases, the policies themselves are not adopted as integral parts of overall national development policies. More critical is that when and if they are approved and/or adopted, formulated policies are neither disseminated widely nor interpreted to implementors and

beneficiaries. Furthermore, with the exception of those concerned with labour-management relationships, most of the manpower policies formulated do lack the legal, operational and institutional basis which would have ensured their effective implementation, evaluation and if necessary, reformulation.

34. The combined effects of poor manpower policy planning, and the disintegrated and unsystematic aproach to policy formulation and administration have not only constrained manpower development and utilization planning in Africa, but have also made mockery of socio-economic development planning in many African countries. In other words, the general nature of manpower policy formulation and administration in Africa leaves much to the desired. By their very nature, human resources policies have been limited in their effectiveness to adequately redress three interrelated human resources management shortcommings that have been clearly identified over the years.

35. First, it has resulted in unclear policy statements and measures on the need for making manpower planning more realistic in terms of its ability to provide those who make decisions on human resources development and utilization with accurate and reliable figures on what occupational categories, and in what numbers and at what skill levels, will be required at a particular time. Secondly, very little has been done by way of introducing and adhearing to policy guidelines that would shift the emphasis of manpower planning activities from forecasting/projection work to analysis and reformulation of policies within the context of African realities and changing priorities. Thirdly, the poor state of affairs have led to the failure of national human resources development policies to find out how best to make the products of education and training systems more suitable and responsive to African urban and rural labour-market conditions and requirements.

36. The impact of the continued presence of these deficiencies and imbalances on the future development trend of Africa in relation to the other world regions cannot be overemphasized. Needless to say that Africa's recovery and development hinge on the adoption and implementation of policy measures, particularly at national levels, that would appropriately enhance the regions ability to adjust and gear its economies in response to fluctuating domestic and world economic conditions, and to changes in climatic conditions as well as to changes in the structure and composition of demand. Anything short of developing such a capability could increase the probability of the future reoccurance of the socio-economic crisis that engulfed Africa in recent years.

37. Two lessons could be drawn from the above assessment which would no doubt have far reaching consequences for the strengthening of human resources policy formulation and administration process in Africa. First, governments should ensure that manpower policy packages embody an outline of goals and

objectives. Such packages should be aimed at the achievement of political, social and economic goals of the nation. In other words, to be meaningful, the formulation and administration of manpower policy, should be an outgrowth of careful analysis of development problems, issues, constraints, and strategies as they relate to the acceptance and implementation of anticipated human resources development and utilization policies.

38. Secondly, national manpower policies should be re-enforced by clear statements on the steps, strategies and techniques for initiating and implementing activities relating to manpower planning and programming; education and training; and employment and labour productivity. Such statements should seek to provide direct answers to a number of issues. For example, in the area of manpower planning and programming, issues such as determining possible operational constraints, establishing objectives and goals of the intended policy as well as the institutional, legal and operational framework for implementing the policies, would need to be considered. Those relating to education and training, would on the other hand focus on human capital investment issues so as to ensure that the present and future work force attains appropriate levels and diversities of knowledge, skills and attitudes within the context of national development needs. Finally, policies aimed at the efficient use of human resources would have to stem from the need to manage employment opportunities, and increase labour efficiency.

39. It should however be noted that these three policy areas are interrelated and consequential of each other. The successful accomplishment of a set of policy objectives in one of these areas, depends to a large extent on what happens in the other two areas. Consequently, member States will have to continue their search for a systematic approach that would ensure the harmonization and integration of manpower development and utilization policies within the overall framework of national development objectives and policies.

IV Status of Manpower and Employment Planning Institutions and Activities: A Selected Survey

40. The dilemma posed by an expanding labour force, on the one hand, and a declining absorptive capacity of the labour market, on the other, has become one of the burning manpower and employment planning issues in Africa. The dilemma is compounded by the inadequacy of labour market information and the complexities of defining and understanding employment and unemployment, skill-technology-mix, productivity and income issues and trends. It is further complicated by weak institutional linkages and in some cases, weak structures regarding manpower training and deployment, and the difficulties in conducting, processing, analysing and disseminating survey results. A status review shows that during the last four years, efforts were intensified by many African governments, and many attempts made at establishing appropriate policy and strategy guidelines for dealing with the

dilemma. The move is indeed a crucial step towards the development of a process for human resources development and utilization planning in Africa. Specifically, attempts have been made with modest gains on two fronts: First, institutional capabilities are being strengthened by a number of countries. Secondly, a series of manpower and employment planning activities are being initiated or have already taken place. To appreciate the status of manpower and employment planning in Africa, is to review the level and effectiveness of performance with respect to these two critical steps which are essential for ensuring an operational human resources management system in the region.

(a) Institutional Arrangements for Human Resources Planning

41. The Conference of Ministers responsible for human resources planning, development and utilization strongly urged the establishment and/or strengthening of national institutional machineries with capabilities for the effective management of human resources as part of the strategy for accelerating socio-economic development in Africa. As indicated earlier, attempts at responding to this call are being made though on a modest scale. In principle, nearly all African governments have accepted the need for strong and operative institutions to deal with human resources planning. In fact many of them have embarked upon concrete steps to build such institutions, not only at the advisory level but also at the levels for inter-sectoral co-ordination and sector studies.

42. Advisory or consultative bodies have been established by a number of governments to formulate, guide, co-ordinate, evaluate and advise on human resources policies and programmes within a planning framework. A National Manpower Board, and a Manpower and Employment Advisory Committee are established with statutory responsibilities in Nigeria and Ethiopia respectively. A National Employment, Manpower and Income Council has been established in Botswana. The Council is supported by other advisory bodies including the Manpower Subcommittee, the Income SubCommittee, the Minimum Wages Advisory Board, the Salary Review Commission, the Wage Policy Committee and the National Training and Technical Education Committee. Besides the National Manpower Development Committee, the Kenyan Government has also established specific sectoral consultative bodies for manpower development. These include the National Industrial Council which is to advise the Labour Minister on matters related to industrial training; the Kenya Education Commission, and the National Committee on Education Objectives and Policies. Similarly, the Egyptian Government has created the Supreme Council for Manpower Planning and Training to formulate, guide, co-ordinate and advise on human resources matters.

43. The day-to-day primary manpower and employment planning functions are, for the most part, dispersed among the ministries or agencies responsible for economic planning and development; public service management; labour and social affairs, education

and training in most African countries. Only few governments have established full ministries to deal with human resources management issues as called for by the first meeting of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization. Those few countries include Egypt which has the Ministry of Manpower and Vocational Training; Tanzania which had long before the Conference decision consolidated manpower and employment planning functions within the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development; and Zimbabwe where the functions are consolidated within the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development.

44. Nonetheless, a number of countries have initiated action to better streamline and co-ordinate manpower and employment planning functions in their respective countries. For example, the Governments of Botswana, Guinea, Lesotho, Togo, Benin and Kenya have restructured their high level manpower advisory bodies with the view to ensuring better co-ordination and to bringing into focus the relationship between human resources planning and the achievement of national development objectives. Some of the efforts have been specific in nature. Ethiopia, for instance, restructured activities of the former Public Administration Institute, the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Management, and the National Industrial Vocational Training Scheme, with the net result being the establishment of the Ethiopian Management Institute made directly responsible to the Council of Ministers with a broad mandate for management training activities throughout the industrial and various Government sectors.

45. What seems encouraging is that most of these institutional reforms are geared more so towards ensuring the integration of human resources planning into national development planning and better co-ordination of manpower and employment planning activities. On the whole, attention is being focused on meeting institutional requirements for formulating and administering manpower development and utilization policies and programmes in the light of identified human resources problems. Accordingly, sectoral manpower planning organs are begining to take roots in most of these countries to lend support to primary manpower and employment planning organs. A laudable and recommendable example of this development is the establishment of the Department of Health Manpower Development and Utilization in the Ministry of Health in Botswana. The Department has four broad responsibilities: the setting of health manpower development policy and priorities; health manpower planning; health manpower development; and the deployment and utilization of health manpower. 46. What is unfortunate is that most of these sector manpower planning organs are more often than not established on a case-by-case basis depending on the level of influence and orientation of a particular ministry as opposed to the use of a systematic and consistent approach in creating within every ministry and enterprise such capabilities. Secondly, except for large public and private enterprises, sector organs are of the traditional type comprising mainly planning bureaus in ecucation ministries

which deals primarily with curriculum planning, education planning, school facility planning and education data collection; and personnel departments or units within various ministries, agencies and enterprises. Steps will therefore have to be taken to reverse the trend of these two practices to ensure a better development management process.

47. Additionally more and more member States have requested for technical assistance towards the building of the required institutional capabilities for manpower and employment planning. Those sought from the ECA in the last four years have taken the form of consultations and national training workshops. The Governments of Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia and Uganda have benefited directly from such support with a view to establishing an effective manpower and employment planning process. Experiences from these consultations and workshops indicate that assistance of this kind is of vital importance to member States in that they serve as complements to national efforts for implementing the decisions of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization.

(b) Manpower and Employment Planning Activities

48. As inferred earlier, the nature and scope of manpower and employment planning activities undertaken would also affect the status of the process, since activities are the lubricants for making our process functional or not. Therefore, a review of activities in a few selected member States was carried out to describe the status of the process. It should be noted that the coverage of activities in these selected countries is not as complete as could be, since the intention here is to only illustrate the trend of events that have taken place in the region during the last few years.

49. Generally, the review shows that the majority of member States have undertaken a series of activities related to the planning function within a human resources management system and have initiated concrete programmes and strategies to affect some of those activities. Unfortunately, resource and other technical constraints have unavoidably depressed the level of effectiveness in these endeavours. Foremost among these constraints are the unclear nature of human resources policies; low commitment towards manpower planning and programming; the inadequacy and/or non-availability of processed data and information required for manpower and employment planning; and the shortage and/or misallocation of trained and experienced manpower and employment planners and statisticians.

50. To better illustrate the efforts being made by African governments and the need for greater efforts we shall highlight some of the activities undertaken in a few countries. Most of these activities took the form of policy revision and reforms, national workshops/conferences/seminars, surveys and studies.

(i) Policy revision and reforms

51. A number of African governments have initiated a series of reform measures in policies related to human resources planning, development and utilization during the last five years. The Tanzania Government reviewed and revised the longstanding "bonding" policy, which demanded that all potential students to the nation's institutions of higher learning should serve at least two years in Government service before joining the institution. Plans are also underway to review the Government's 1964 policy on human resources, and to institute policy measures that would strengthen the flow of information for better human resources planning in Tanzania. The Government of Zaire, through legislation No. 84-033, instituted an annual levy payroll deduction policy in 1984 which would increase funds to the National Institute of vocational training. A recent move by the Zairian Government was the inclusion within the 1986-1990 Development Plan objectives and strategies for the reorganization of public management, and the creation of new jobs through community projects.

52. Policy measures were also taken by the Governments of Cote d'Ivoire (1987), Djibouti (1985), and Tunisia (1985) all aimed at rationalizing the civil service and making it more productive and cost-effective. One of such measures taken in Cote d'Ivoire was the increase in the retirement age from 55 to 60 for those employed in higher education, scientific research and medicines. The rationale was that the training cost of such personnel to society is great, and given their scarcity, it would only be prudent to use their skills and knowledge for as long as possible. Another important measure initiated is that all civil servants holding teaching or engineering degrees would now be required to exercise their professions in the field rather than occupying administrative office post. New legislation on the status and union rights of the civil servants was introduced in Djibouti. These new conditions govern specifically recruitment, dismissal, salary and wages, retirement and conditions of service. In Tunisia, the Government consolidated the Legislative Act providing new dimensions with respect to retirement age, the granting of bonuses and the amount of annual pensions.

53. Another related area where Member States have made policy reforms is in the granting of incentives, benefits and job security for the labour force. For example, direct policy measures were taken by the Governments of Benin, Cameroon, Guinea, Mauritius, the Central African Republic and Zimbabwe to improve the welbeing of their respective work force. With the passage of Act 83-008, the Government of Benin established legislation controls on recruitment and dismissals and entrusted the monitoring responsibility to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The policy under this law requires that all companies declare full details of their manpower turnover and utilization on an annual basis. Regarding recruitment procedures, all employers must notify the regional placement office within their

occupational sector of all job vacancies and the required qualifications. Equally, no dismissals may be made without advanced notice given to or authorization received from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Additionally, a providence fund, financed by members' contributions, a subsidy and interest on investments, has been established to facilitate resettlement of national emigrant workers from abroad when they finally return to Benin.

54. In 1984, the Government of Cameroon and the Central African Republic revised their Pension Acts and the Cameroon Government amended its life insurance scheme. Improvements made concerned voluntary affiliation, early retirement privileges, invalidity, old-age and the protection of survivers after death. Several changes were made in 1993 by the Government of Cameroon in respect of regulations governing staff redundancies. Similarly, changes in workers' benefit rates, contributions and the management system were introduced by the Guinea Government through ordainance 265/PRG in 1994. These were basically aimed at streamlining the social security scheme. An unemployment hardship relief scheme, covering heads of family who are registered as unemployed and are actively looking for work, was introduced in Mauritius by act of legislation as an initial step towards the creation of an unemployment insurance scheme. On its part, the Government of Zimbabwe laid down minimum wage rates for all categories of occupation and has out into motion measures to harmonize wages.

55. As can be seen, most of these reforms were geared towards improving labour-management relations. Similar efforts will have to be made in respect of human resources development policies and human resources planning and programming policies to complete the picture. In addition and as stated earlier, efforts will have to be intensified and resources allocated for strengthening the process of policy formulation, policy management and policy implementation if Africa's recovery and self-sustained development are to be accelerated efficiently.

(ii) National Workshops/Seminars/Conferences

56. In 1984 two national manpower workshops were held by the Tanzanian Government. One was on the appraisal of manpower policies and planning which was mounted in September for manpower officials in Government Ministries and region. The other was held in December on manpower policies and planning, information systems and manpower utilization for Heads of Manpower Development and Administration in Government Ministries and regions. In the same year, a national policy conference on education and training was held in Liberia aimed at reviewing and streamlining human resources development policies and strategies. In the following year, the Liberian Government, in collaboration with the ECA, organized a national manpower and employment planning staff development workshop. The primary objective was to strengthen staffing and institutional capabilities for the production and analysis of human resources data and the formulation and administration of manpower policies and strategies.

57. National workshops with objectives similar to those of the Liberian Workshop were organized in Botswana and Uganda in 1987 with assistance from the ECA. A training workshop on public service manpower planning and allocation was organized by the Government of Botswana in March. Prior to this, and as a follow-up to the 1981 national manpower planning workshop, the Government mounted a national manpower planning seminar in 1983 which concentrated on institutional arrangements, localization of the workforce, employment generation possibilities and constraints, and education and training. On its part, the Ugandan Government organized a national manpower and employment planning staff development workshop in May 1987. Like the Liberian Workshop, the objective here was to strengthen staffing and institutional capabilities for human resources management. In Nigeria, a national workshop on manpower development and utilization was held in 1985 aimed at strengthening staffing capabilities of those managing the public service. Two seminars, one on employment in a depressed economy with particular reference to graduate employment and the other on manpower potentialities, were also organized by the Nigerian Government.

58. A tripartite symposium on employment was organized in Mali in 1984 with participants drawn from Government, employers and employees. A number of recommendations emerged from the symposium and a number of practical measures adopted to improve employment planning and management in the country. These measures touched on policies for strengthening the data and information base and employment management institutions. A year earlier, the Tunisian Association of Occupational Safety and Improved Working Conditions had organized a seminar, the objective of which was to examine the possibility for including courses on occupational safety, and health conditions into the education and training curricula. The impact of the seminar led to the establishment of a permanent pedagogical advisory panel to advise on the programme, as well as to the introduction of a

course on occupational safety for fifth-year students in the University science faculties.

59. Apparently, the momentum for organizing workshops and seminars on a strategy for developing national capabilities to plan and manage human resources for development is on the rise. One area o concern however, lies in the extent to which Member States and the international organization have been able to institute and execute follow-up measures to these activities. Perhaps as a more useful approach, successive workshops and seminars should be interconnected within the framework of a well laid down follow-up plan. From a small sample of the various reports emerging from these exercises, very little has been done to follow this approach.

(iii) Surveys and studies

60. The 1980 employment survey in Ethiopia, conducted for ministries and public and private enterprises employing at least 50 persons, was followed by a comprehensive employment survey in 1983. This was in support of the Government's growing interest in gathering reliable manpower and employment data and information. In addition, basic research on several human activity and the assessment of the urban informal and rural agricultural sectors were undertaken during the last year. Since 1982, the Nigerian Government had conducted a labour force sample survey; a shuttle employment enquiry study; a manpower and training needs survey in selected industries and a graduate employment tracer study. In Liberia, an establishment survey was conducted in 1982 followed by a manpower survey in 1985 with both aimed at assessing the manpower demand and supply situation in the economy. Tanzania conducted a major national manpower survey in 1986 covering nearly 1,200 establishments from the public parastatals and private sectors. Since 1980, three establishment surveys related to manpower had been conducted by the Government of Uganda: Survey of Manpower and training in the Ministry of Lands, Minerals and Water Resources (1982); Census of Civil Service (1984) and Survey of Transport Manpower and Training, (1985).

61. The Botswana Government has institutionalized the employment survey as an annual activity over the years. This is supplemented by an annual labour force survey with the first comprehensive labour force survey taking place between May 1984 and April 1985. The other relevant institutionalized annual survey is the education survey which is conducted jointly by the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Education. Two major human resources studies were undertaken by the Botswana Government in 1987. One was on manpower requirement and the Botswana polytechnic and the brigades, while the other concertrated on training needs for the mines. Other important studies undertaken included studies on management and productivity, and employment and labour use in Botswana.

62. The processing and publication of the results of these various studies and surveys have been constrained greatly by two main factors. Nearly all Member States are limited in their ability to recruit and retain qualified staff. Compounding this is a rapid turnover of the few trained and experienced analys programmers and data processors. Together, these two have led to an acute shortage of data managers who are needed to facilitate the preparation of respectable publication on manpower and employment related issues. Secondly, the exercise is constrained by poor data processing technology. Computerized data processing in many African countries, particularly Sub-saharan Africa, is still in its infancy. Where attempts have been made to set up the system, these have been faced with the shortage of system analysts, programmers and maintenance personnel. These constraints notwithstanding, many countries have made modest gains

to have the data collected published, though often published late and with smaller degrees of statistical confidence.

V Observations on the Effectiveness of the Process and its Long-term Prospects for Stimulating Economic Recovery and Development in Africa

63. What emerges from the analysis with regards to the nature, status and scope of human resources planning and programming in Africa is an encouraging picture. First, the need to establish appropriate institutional arrangements to administer the process for ensuring national development seems to have been felt by African governments. This urge is derived from poor development results which have been obtained in the last few years partly because of the general tendency for governments to pay little or no attention to the manpower implications for the implementation of national development plans. Secondly, an institutional and operational framework for an overall human resources management system has begun to evolve in many African States. This is manifested in the many efforts that are being made to establish national policy organs and a number of supportive inter-sectoral and sectoral human resources management organs.

64. At the moment, the impact of these efforts is dampened by a number of impediments which, to an extent, differ in form and character from one country to the next. However, there are certain common weaknesses whose presence has constrained the effectiveness of the process, and which will have to be overcome to ensure the adequate functioning of the process. To begin with, activities of the "organic parts" will have to be systematically designed and integrated with those carried out by primary manpower and employment planning organs in relation to those carried out by the advisory/consultative organs. More often than not, sectoral organs, which should have been complementary in nature, do adopt inward-looking approaches in their activities with little or no reference made to the activities of national primary organs responsible for manpower and employment policy formulation and planning. The process also suffers generally from technical inadequacies in regards to the application of the state of the art of manpower and employment planning, and from the absence of a conclusive conceptual framework for human resources management within the context of Africa development profile, needs and objectives. In addition to the shortage of funcs and well trained and experienced manpower and employment planners and data collectors, the process is also constrained by the lack of effective linkages and co-ordination in the activities of the various organs responsible directly or indirectly for the planning and programming of manpower and its utilization.

65. Three major steps will therefore have to be taken inorder to reverse the above situation. First, national and regional efforts made so far towards the establishment of the required institutional arrangements will have to be sustained and intensified during and beyond the recovery period. Secondly,

specific policies with respect to manpower and employment planning and programming, as well as to the strengthening of institutional interrelationships and linkages within the aggregate development planning system will have to be clearly stated and vigorously pursued. Thirdly, steps will have to be taken to ensure adequate managerial professional and operational capabilities within the created institutions with emphasis placed on the specification of clear and measurable work programme together with unit terms of references; the initiation of staff development and utilization policies and programmes; and the administration and periodic evaluation of policies and programmes.

66. In addition to these institutional reforms, the scope and relevancy of manpower and employment planning and programming activities will have to be broadened and consolidated. Systematic planning for the mobilization, development and utilization of requisite African manpower would have to take on greater significance particularly if national development objectives are to be met. This means that the thrust of such efforts will have to be geared towards the long-term creation of institutional machinery with staffing and operational capabilities to produce the

following: - Reliable and up-to-date periodic education, manpower, labour force and labour market statistics and information:

- Plans, policies and strategies for matching skills and jobs, creating employment opportunities, increasing labour productivity and developing requisite human skills, knowledge and attitudes; and

- Technical services towards the implementation of human resources development and utilization programmes and policies.

67. In short, for the process to exert the necessary influence on Africa's economic recovery and development, structures and interrelationships of institutions would need to be strengthened where they exist, and created where they don't. The prospects for doing so seem encouraging particularly given the provisions and commitments of APPER and UN-PAAERD as they relate to the mobilization and management of human resources for the long-term economic and social transformation of Africa.